

Facts About Cuba

OFFICIAL NAME
Republic of Cuba

LAND

Area: 114,524 sq km (44,218 sq mi).

Capital and largest city: Havana (1991 pop., 2,059,000).

Elevations: highest—Turquino Peak, 1,994 m (6,542 ft); lowest—sea level, along the coast.

PEOPLE

Population (1992 est.): 10,846,821; density: 94.7 persons per sq km (245 per sq mi).

Distribution (1989): 72% urban, 28% rural.

Annual growth (1992): 1.0%.

Official language: Spanish.

Major religion: Roman Catholicism.

EDUCATION AND HEALTH

Literacy (1990 est.): 94% of adult population.

Universities (1984): 4.

Hospital beds (1986): 54,028.

Physicians (1986): 25,567.

Life expectancy (1992): women—79; men—74.

Infant mortality (1992): 11 per 1,000 live births.

ECONOMY

GNP (1991 est.): \$17 billion; \$1,580 per capita.

Labor distribution (1986): services—24%; agriculture—18%; trade—11%; manufacturing, mining, and utilities—22%.

Foreign trade (1991 est.): imports—\$3.7 billion; exports—\$3.6 billion; principal trade partners—former USSR, China, Spain, Canada.

Currency: 1 Cuban peso = 100 centavos.

GOVERNMENT

Type: Communist one-party state.

Government leader (1994): Fidel Castro—president.

Legislature: National Assembly of People's Power.

Political subdivisions: 14 provinces, 169 municipalities.

COMMUNICATIONS

Railroads (1991): 12,654 km (7,862 mi) total.

Roads (1991): 16,740 km (10,378 mi) total.

Major ports: 10.

Major airfields: 3.

World Bank Group

OFFICIAL NAME
Republic of Cuba

LAKE

Area (sq km) 114,170

Capital and largest city Havana (1991 pop. 2,082,000)

Elevation highest-Tindio Peak, 1,951 m (6,401 ft) lowest-sea level along the coast

PEOPLE

Population (1992 est.) 10,948,531, density 94.7 persons per sq km (243 per sq mi)

Distribution (1989) 73% urban, 26% rural

Annual growth (1989) 1.0%

Official language Spanish

Major religion Roman Catholicism

EDUCATION AND HEALTH

Literacy (1990 est.) 94% of adult population

Universities (1994) 4

Health beds (1990) 64,016

Physicians (1990) 23,967

Life expectancy (1990) women-76, men-74

Infant mortality (1990) 11 per 1,000 live births

ECONOMY

GDP (1991 est.) \$17.7 billion \$1,650 per capita

Factor distribution (1988) services-34%, agriculture-18%, state-17%, manufacturing, mining, and others-31%
Foreign trade (1991 est.) imports-\$2.7 billion exports-\$5.6 billion central bank balance-\$1.5 billion (1991) claims

Spain, Canada

Currency Cuban peso = 100 centavos

GOVERNMENT

Type Communist one-party state

Government leader (1991) Fidel Castro-Garcia

Legislature National Assembly of People's Power

Political subdivisions 14 provinces, 152 municipalities

COMMUNICATIONS

Postcode (1991) 12,800 km (7,953 mi) total

Radio (1991) 18,740 km (11,643 mi) total

Major ports 10

Airline airlines 2

Guantanamo

{gwahn-tahn'-ah-moh}

Guantanamo (1989 est. pop., 197,868) is a city in the mountainous Oriente province in southeastern Cuba. It is located on the Guasco River about 16 km (10 mi) north of the U. S. naval base (established in 1903) at Guantanamo Bay on the coast. Guantanamo is linked to Santiago de Cuba 64 km (40 mi) to the southwest by rail and road. The economy is based on the processing of sugarcane and coffee grown on nearby plantations and on salt production. Guantanamo was founded in 1819 by French exiles from Haiti, an influence preserved in the city's architecture from this period.

Guantanamo Bay

Guantanamo Bay is a large deepwater harbor on the southeastern shore of Cuba, about 100 km (60 mi) from the eastern end of the island. One of the best-protected bays in the world, it covers 75 sq km (30 sq mi). The bay was first used as a naval station by Britain. In 1903 it was granted to the United States by a treaty that cannot be annulled without the consent of both the United States and Cuba. Haitian refugees seeking asylum in the United States were detained at the U. S. base in Guantanamo during 1992.

Guantanamo

(Gwan-tan-ah-mo)

Guantanamo (1903) is a city in the mountains of Cuba. It is located on the coast of the Gulf of Mexico, about 16 km (10 mi) north of the U.S. naval base established in 1903. The city is linked to the coast by a road. The second largest city in the province of Guantanamo is located on the coast, about 16 km (10 mi) north of the city. The second largest city in the province of Guantanamo is located on the coast, about 16 km (10 mi) north of the city. The second largest city in the province of Guantanamo is located on the coast, about 16 km (10 mi) north of the city.

Havana

{huh-van'-uh}

Havana (Spanish: La Habana), the capital of Cuba, is located on the north coast of the island about 160 km (100 mi) south of Key West, Fla. With a population of 2,119,059 (1991 est.) it is the largest city in the West Indies. It is built around a spacious and well-protected harbor and is overlooked by a 60-m-high (200-ft) limestone ridge parallel to the coast. The Rio Almendares crosses the city. The average temperature in Havana is 28 deg C (82 deg F) in July and 22 deg C (72 deg F) in January. Rainfall, which occurs mostly from May to October, averages 1,880 mm (74 in) annually. Hurricanes are frequent from June to October.

Havana's industries include food processing, shipbuilding, automotive manufacturing (buses), and printing, as well as the production of liquors, textiles, cigars, paper, and other consumer goods. Fishing and agriculture are carried on in the surrounding area.

Modern Havana has large parks and broad avenues. One of these avenues is an esplanade, El Malecon, which runs parallel to the seacoast for several miles. It skirts El Vedado (the Park) where high-rise hotels and luxurious residences were built before the 1959 Cuban revolution. On a hill within the city is located the campus of the large University of Havana (founded 1728). Other important public buildings include the National Library, the Jose Marti monument, the national museum, and the sports center. The old section of Havana has narrow streets and attractive colonial buildings, such as the cathedral from the early 18th century and the municipal government building. The magnificent capitol building is now the home of the Academy of Sciences of Cuba, and the palm-shaded Paseo de Jose Marti, lined with stately mansions, extends from it to the harbor. Of the Spanish colonial fortresses, the most noted are Castillo de la Punta and Castillo del Morro, with its famous lighthouse, which dominates the narrow entrance to the harbor. Numerous historic buildings in the port section of Old Havana have been restored since 1981, when the Cuban government launched an ambitious program to preserve the city's architectural heritage. A notable restored site is the Cathedral Plaza.

Havana is one of the oldest cities in the Western Hemisphere and was, in the 18th century, the New World's greatest port. It was moved to its present site from an earlier location to the south in 1519. Because of its fine harbor, the city soon became an important naval and commercial center for the Spanish colonies in the Caribbean. Ships with gold and silver from Mexico and South America were formed into fleets at Havana so that the Spanish navy could protect them from pirates during the journey back to Spain.

The British captured Havana in 1762, when it was a city of about 50,000 inhabitants, but they soon returned it to Spain in exchange for Florida. The U.S. battleship Maine blew up in Havana harbor (1898), precipitating the Spanish-American War. American occupation (1898-1902) ended Spanish rule. After 1959, under the government of Fidel Castro, austerity replaced luxury, and Havana's tourist trade all but ceased until a modest revival began in the late 1970s.

Thomas Mathews

Santiago de Cuba

{sahn-tee-ah'-goh day koo'-bah}

Santiago de Cuba, the second-largest seaport of Cuba (after Havana), lies on the southern coast of the island on an almost landlocked bay. The population is 405,354 (1990 est.). Manufactures include textiles and petroleum products, and mines in the surrounding mountains yield copper, manganese, and iron. The Universidad de Oriente (1947) is located there. A fortress atop the 60-m-high (200-ft) bluff, El Morro, guards the harbor entrance. Founded in 1514, Santiago de Cuba was, until 1551, the capital of Cuba and served as a base for expeditions into Mexico in the 1520s. In 1898 during the Spanish-American War, the Battle of San Juan Hill took place there, and the Spanish fleet was destroyed in the city's harbor. Fidel Castro's revolutionary cause took its name (the 26th of July Movement) from the unsuccessful attack on the city's army barracks in 1953.

Ten Years' War

The Ten Years' War (1868-78), an unsuccessful guerrilla campaign against Spanish rule in Cuba, laid the groundwork for the eventual freedom of Cuba (1898). Native Cubans had long resented Spain's arbitrary treatment of the colony, the taxes and censorship, the refusal to emancipate slaves, and the overall government corruption. Taking advantage of revolutionary ferment in Spain, Carlos Manuel de CESPEDES and his followers declared Cuban independence at Yara in October 1868. The provisional government soon controlled the eastern half of the island and attracted widespread support.

The bloody war dragged on for nearly 10 years. Guerrilla tactics were used against the Spanish army that arrived in 1876, but no decisive battles were fought. Cuban efforts to secure U.S. intervention failed. The war ended in 1878, when Spain, at the Pact of El Zanjón, promised amnesty and political reform. Complete emancipation was eventually granted, but many other promises were broken. Cuban rebels took up arms again in 1895 and achieved independence 3 years later.

Bibliography: Lee, F., and Wheeler, J., *Cuba's Struggle against Spain* (1976); Suchlicki, J., *Cuba: From Columbus to Castro*, 3d ed. (1990).

Yan Yuen Wan

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Editorial: 1985, 1987, and 1988. J. Cuba's Struggle Against Spain (1985) Book 1, Cuba From Columbus to Castro, ed. (1980).

Spanish-American War

The Spanish-American War (1898) marked the emergence of the United States as a great power and the advent of American overseas imperialism.

During the 19th century, American exponents of MANIFEST DESTINY likened Cuba, a Spanish colony, to a ripening fruit destined ultimately to fall into outstretched American hands. The expansionists' hunger intensified after 1895, when Cuban nationalists began a bloody insurrection against the Spanish colonial government. Spain's ruthless Gen. Valeriano Weyler herded Cuban farmers into squalid concentration camps. Many men, women, and children died, and Weyler was dubbed "butcher" by William Randolph Hearst's sensationalist New York Journal. This and other "yellow" journals (see YELLOW JOURNALISM) fanned American public opinion and editorialized for humanitarian intervention and the annexation of Cuba by the United States. On Feb. 9, 1898, Hearst published a purloined private letter in which the Spanish minister to the United States sharply criticized President William MCKINLEY; on February 15, the American battleship MAINE exploded in Havana harbor. McKinley had resisted the surging pressure for intervention as long as resistance was politically expedient, but the drift toward war soon became inexorable despite accelerated Spanish attempts to withdraw from Cuba without losing face. On April 11, McKinley in effect requested a declaration of war, which Congress passed on April 25.

The Fighting

Combat lasted only 10 weeks, but it proved one-sided and decisive. In the Pacific, Commodore George DEWEY steamed swiftly from Hong Kong aboard his flagship Olympia, one of the modern steel cruisers of the "new navy" fashioned in the 1880s and '90s. Dewey's squadron slipped into Manila harbor and on May 1 destroyed the obsolete Spanish fleet lying at anchor. Reinforced by the army in June, Dewey besieged the Spanish garrison in Manila, capturing the city on August 13. In July—to support these combined operations—the U.S. Navy had seized Spanish Guam and previously unclaimed Wake Island, and Congress by joint resolution had annexed Hawaii.

In the Caribbean, Spanish ships under Adm. Pasqual Cervera sailed safely into the harbor of Santiago de Cuba. By the end of May, however, they were blockaded there by U.S. naval forces. U.S. troops under Gen. William R. SHAFTER landed in Cuba in late June and pressed toward Santiago. These ground forces included the regular army as well as special volunteer regiments, the most famous of which were the ROUGH RIDERS, led by Theodore ROOSEVELT and Leonard WOOD. The Americans were victorious at the battles of El Caney and San Juan Hill on July 1. Determined to maintain Spain's honor, Cervera made a dash for the open sea on July 3, although the imbalance between his outdated Spanish vessels and the modern American ships off Cuba was almost as great as the disparity between the fleets in the Philippines. The guns of the new battleships and cruisers commanded by Rear Admiral William T. SAMPSON and Commodore Winfield Scott SCHLEY sank most of the Spanish ships in less than 4 hours. Spain suffered 474 casualties to only two for the United States. On July 17, Santiago and Cuba's 24,000 Spanish troops surrendered. Madrid sued for peace 9 days later.

The Treaty of Paris

During the peace negotiations the United States did not seek annexation of Cuba because the Teller Amendment to the declaration of war forbade American acquisition of the island. However, McKinley demanded Spanish cession of Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippine Islands. In the Treaty of Paris, concluded on December 10, a humiliated Spain yielded to American imperialism.

The Imperialistic grab was not universally popular in the United States, and the Senate fight over the treaty was intense. Among those opposed to annexation of the Philippines were Mark Twain, Andrew Carnegie, several senior Republican senators, and many Democrats. They argued that acquisition of noncontiguous areas populated by peoples allegedly unsuited for assimilation into American society was contrary to the principles of American democracy. The imperialists stressed the role of the United States as an agent of civilization and the importance of possessing a threshold to the trade with China, on which the Americans and British were attempting to impose the so-called Open Door Policy. The imperialists carried the day, in large measure because William Jennings BRYAN, an avowed antiimperialist and the probable Democratic candidate for president in 1900, urged Democratic senators to vote for the Treaty of Paris in order to terminate the state of war. By the narrow margin of 57 to 27 (only two votes more than the number needed for ratification) the Senate approved the pact on Feb. 6, 1899. Bryan, who intended to relinquish the Philippines if elected president, lost the election of 1900 to McKinley, and the United States retained the islands.

The "splendid little war" established the United States as a major power in the Far East and the dominant power in

the Caribbean. Although Filipino nationalists fought a bitter four-year struggle for immediate independence, the United States clung to the archipelago because it seemed a portal to the China market. Puerto Rico became an American colony and the site of an American naval base, and nominally independent Cuba ceded territory for naval stations to the United States under the terms of a constitution—with the so-called PLATT AMENDMENT appended to it—imposed by the American Congress and Secretary of War Elihu ROOT. These two islands were strategically significant to the defense of the Panama Canal, which was begun in 1904.

Kenneth J. Hagan

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A contemporary cartoon portrays the United States and Spain grappling over Cuba, the principal issue of the Spanish-American War (1898). The war cost Spain its last colonies -- the Philippines, Guam, Puerto Rico, and Cuba. (The Bettmann Archive)



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